

<b>POLICE/SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>GENERAL ORDERS</b>
<b>SUBJECT: Prisoner Restraints</b>	<b>NUMBER: 2-7</b>
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999</b>	<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>
<b>AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: GO 2-7, January 1988</b>	<b>APPROVED: _____ Chief of Police/Sheriff</b>
<b>CALEA STANDARDS: 71.1, 71.2, 71.3</b>	<b>VLEPSC STANDARDS: OPR.08.01, OPR.09.01</b>

## **NOTE**

This order is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third-party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

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## **INDEX WORDS**

Handcuffs  
Investigative detention  
Positional asphyxia  
Restraints

## **I. POLICY**

The officer's responsibility for the safe custody of prisoners permits some discretion in the use of handcuffs and restraining devices. The department requires officers to observe their own safety and that of the people they transport by carefully restraining most prisoners (except children) who must be taken to a jail or other location. See also GO 2-8, Transporting Prisoners.

## **II. PURPOSE**

To establish guidelines for the use of handcuffs and restraining devices.

## **III. PROCEDURES - Arrested Persons**

### **A. General**

1. Officers shall handcuff or restrain all arrested adults.

2. The nature of the restraint chosen to subdue a suspect and the related method of transporting a suspect to jail or to court depends on the level of threat against the officer. A minimal threat may require restraint through metal or plastic handcuffs. A threat of property damage or injury posed by the suspect may require restraint through a body belt, leg or ankle restraints, or a vehicle cage. The most severe threat may involve a full-body wrap or a straight jacket and perhaps a vehicle equipped with specialized restraints.
3. Juveniles shall not be handcuffed unless they pose an escape risk, the juvenile has committed a crime of violence, or where the officer reasonably believes handcuffing to be necessary for the safety of the juvenile or officer.

B. Handcuffs

1. Officers shall handcuff a person with the hands in back, palms facing outward, but may choose to handcuff hands in front if the prisoner meets any of the following conditions:
  - a. Is obviously pregnant.
  - b. Has a physical handicap.
  - c. Has injuries that may be aggravated by standard handcuffing procedures.
2. Officers shall not handcuff a person to the transport vehicle or any part of it, or to any other fixed object such as a door or pipe.
3. Officers shall double-lock handcuffs to help ensure prisoner and officer safety. Double locking reduces the chance of picking the lock or of the bracelet accidentally closing, further restricting circulation.

C. Body belt

The body belt allows the officer to handcuff the prisoner in front yet restricts the movement of the prisoner's arms and hands. Normally, this device will be used when transporting prisoners considerable distances.

D. Ankle shackles

Ankle shackles shall be used by officers when transporting any prisoner they have reason to believe might be an escape risk.

E. Plastic handcuffs

Plastic handcuffs shall be used when officers take into custody several prisoners or when a prisoner requires multiple restraints. Officers must understand that plastic handcuffs once applied can only be removed with a knife or pair of shears.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES - Persons not arrested**

- A. If officers have a reasonable suspicion that a suspect has been involved in a violent offense, then handcuffs may be applied while officers investigate the possibility that criminal conduct occurred. See GO 2-3, Field Interviews, for further discussion of the legal aspects of investigative detention.
- B. Persons not arrested but who are subject to investigative detention may be restrained under the following circumstances.
  - 1. Suspects shall be handcuffed only as long as necessary to accomplish the investigative goal.
  - 2. Handcuffing of suspects shall be accomplished with minimal discomfort to the suspect.
  - 3. Officers shall limit the number and type of restraints used on the suspect to what is reasonably necessary to accomplish the investigation.

#### **V. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

##### **A. Positional asphyxia**

Officers shall not hog-tie suspects by placing them in a prone position with the hands and ankles bound from behind with handcuffs, belts, or other devices. As soon as any suspect who is lying on his or her stomach has been handcuffed, officers shall roll the suspect onto his or her side, or place the suspect in a sitting position.

- 1. Positional asphyxia occurs when the position of the body interferes with respiration. A prone, hog-tied suspect may suffocate. Intoxication, presence of a head injury, obesity, and physical disability are all circumstances that can increase the possibility of suffocation.
- 2. Ascertain if the suspect has used alcohol or drugs recently or suffers from any cardiac or respiratory problem. Monitor the suspect and obtain medical treatment if necessary.